

● The Progressive Review

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The Democrats' right-wing follies

Paul Rockwell

● A debate is taking place in Democratic Party between right and left wing Democrats, between centrists and progressives, over perspective and strategy for 1992. Centrists, like Senators Sam Nunn and Charles Robb, blame the misfortunes of the party on excessive liberalism, and they claim that only by moving the party to the right can Democrats regain the White House.

The centrist theory, so often repeated in media commentary, contradicts the historical record--not only the record of three successive defeats in presidential elections from 1980 to 1988, when the party shifted to the right--but the overall record of Democratic presidents from Roosevelt to Carter. Since 1932 Democratic presidential candidates have achieved five landslide victories, and all five landslides were created through progressive campaigns that identified the Democratic Party with movements for social reform. The four campaigns of Franklin Roosevelt and the landslide victory of Lyndon Johnson in 1964 were grand coalition campaigns. These great crusades did not dwell on the white middle-class. Nor did they fawn over lost Democrats. Instead they reached beyond the party establishment to the unemployed, to the poor, to the new, rising electorate of the times.

● With only one telling exception, no Cold War Democratic candidate ever won a decisive majority of the popular vote. Truman got 49.5 percent in 1948; Kennedy got 49.9 percent in the squeaker of 1960. Carter got a bare majority over Ford in 1976, a result of public hostility over Watergate. The one candidate who did sweep the country was Lyndon Johnson, and

he made support for civil rights central to his crusade for the Great Society. The great Democratic victories (Roosevelt and Johnson) were all progressive, highly ideological crusades against poverty and injustice.

History does not vindicate the viewpoint of the right-wing Democrats. The centrist theory is wrong, not only in terms of electoral results; it is also wrong in terms of those huge fiascos that brought down three Democratic presidents--Truman, Johnson, and Carter. While fidelity of FDR to progressive causes kept him in the White House for four terms in a row, no Cold War Democratic president kept the White House beyond a single elected term. The policies and mistakes of Democrats in office set the conditions for subsequent elections. What did the presidents of one elected term,--Truman, Johnson, Carter--do wrong *in office*? The answer to that question tends to discredit the centrist position. Every one-term Democratic president made *right-wing* errors that precipitated his own downfall and betrayed the liberal mandate that held the Democratic Party together. The fall of Truman in 1952, the humiliation of Lyndon Johnson in 1968, the defeat of Carter in 1980--great Democratic traumas--were all direct results of right wing follies in office.

McCarthyism and War Crippled Truman

As a New Dealer, Truman was popular, but Truman made a right wing shift away from FDR: the establishment of a conservative cabinet, the use of

troops and injunctions against steel workers and miners on strike, the red-baiting of Henry Wallace, the State Department persecution of Paul Robeson, Truman's reactionary government loyalty oath that paved the way for the rise of McCarthyism, and the Korean War, especially the disastrous march to the Yalu River on China's border. All this split the Democratic Party, confused the electorate, emboldened the Republicans, and brought Truman's demise. Clay Blair summed up the effect of Truman's right wing shift in *The Forgotten War, America In Korea*: The war "fostered a national climate which strengthened the appeal of McCarthyism and similar repressive ideologies and unseated the Democratic Party, which had held the White House for 20 years."

Trapped in his own undeclared land war in Asia,

Truman was so unpopular by 1952 that he declined to run for a second term. And the Democratic Party leadership had become so right wing that the Republican adversary, Dwight D. Eisenhower, outflanked the Democrats from the left. When Eisenhower promised to end the Korean war--"the time has come to bring our boys home"--Adlai Stevenson lost any chance for victory. (The same pattern repeated itself in 1968 when Democrats were trapped in Johnson's war in Vietnam).

Johnson Won as A Dove, Lost as a Hawk

The rise and fall of Lyndon Johnson is full of lessons that centrist Democrats overlook. Centrists ignore the progressive character of Johnson's historic landslide of 1964, and they overlook the right-wing causes for Johnson's humiliation, the self-destruction of the Democratic Party in 1968.

It was a progressive not a centrist strategy that set off the landslide of 1964. Johnson did not "hug the center." He used a mass, grand coalition strategy similar to FDR. Three progressive themes--peace, commitment to ending poverty, full civil rights--dominated the 1964 campaign. "We can't just push a button," Johnson would say at his campaign stops, "and tell an independent country to go to hell. We cannot keep the peace by bluff and bluster and ultimatums." Johnson also challenged the conservative premise that mass poverty is the fault of the poor, a permanent part of American society.

In civil rights, Johnson took the most advanced position on racial issues of any Democratic Party nominee in post-war history. Johnson toured southern states, confronted the residual fears of his southern brethren, and appealed to the enlightened self-interests of black and white together. Under the impact of the civil rights movements, the Johnson team rejected the centrist strategy, the kind of campaign that seeks to avoid civil rights issues and panders to whites' fear to change. As early as the 1960s the centrist approach already had a record of failure. Adlai Stevenson, the experienced governor of Illinois, cultivated a liberal image, but practiced a centrist strategy in his campaigns. During the 1956 campaign against Eisenhower, a black woman asked Stevenson to take a clear stand on the historic Supreme Court ruling against segregated schools. Stevenson, who became a two-time loser, refused to support the use of federal troops to enforce the ruling. He even reached an agreement with Eisenhower to keep the issue of race and segregation--an issue on the mind of all Americans--out of the campaign. As a result of default on civil rights, Stevenson lost by a bigger margin in 1956 than in 1952.

By 1960 it was becoming clear that Democratic candidates could not win presidential elections, much less a real popular mandate, by running away from civil rights. In the Kennedy campaign of 1960, a mere

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Bucking the System Since 1966

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phone call to Coretta King on behalf of Dr. King in jail may have made the difference between defeat and Kennedy's slim victory. Johnson wisely did not repeat the mistakes of Stevenson. Johnson even went beyond FDR, Truman, and beyond Kennedy on civil rights, passing the historic Civil Rights Bill of 1964, then attacked Goldwater for his opposition to the 14th amendment. No congressman who voted for the 1964 civil rights bill was defeated for re-election, and eleven congressmen who voted *against* the civil rights bill (out of 22 northern congressmen) were defeated for re-election.

The Johnson campaign discredits the prevailing "white-flight" theory, not only in contrast to Stevenson's defeats, but in contrast to the subsequent centrist campaigns of Mondale and Dukakis, former liberals who tried to play down civil rights. Since 1944 Johnson was the only Democratic candidate to win a majority of *white* voters.

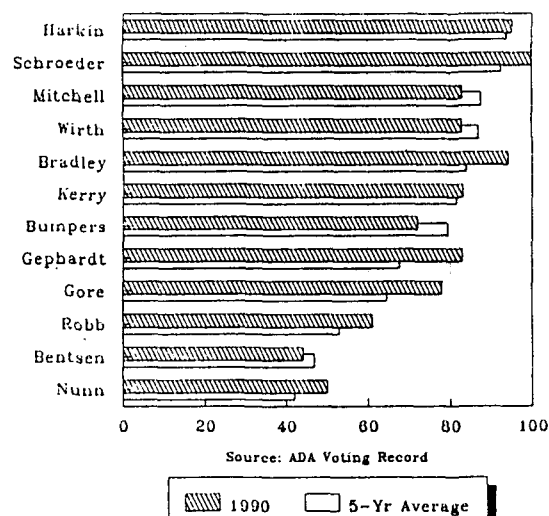
The campaign experience of 1964 tends to confirm the progressive viewpoint of Jesse Jackson: that whenever oppressed people claim their rights with dignity and determination, "the moral support of the American people will become an active force on their side." In the post-Johnson period, it was Democratic Party default on civil rights, not identification with black progress, that made a Republican "southern strategy" successful. When Democrats keep faith with progressive traditions, when they stand on principle, the Republicans become the whiners and weaklings, like Goldwater in 1964.

Theodore White, award-winning conservative chronicler of post-war national campaigns, called the Johnson crusade of 1964 "the most successful campaign in all American history." The enlightened, progressive tone of the campaign, its connection with grass-roots movements outside the official Democratic Party, garnered 61 percent of the popular vote, the largest percentage at that time in U.S. history.

To be sure, the Johnson campaign did not take place in a vacuum. Democratic leaders resisted change and only took progressive positions under pressure. Electoral campaigns that reflect the aspirations of democratic-minded voters will rarely succeed unless they are backed by an aroused, active movement. The peace movement and civil rights movement were decisive parts of the Johnson landslide. Reluctant at first, the Democratic Party leadership finally identified the party with movements for social reform, and they portrayed those movements, not as "special interests," (as centrists treat them today), but as just causes of concern to all Americans.

So long as the leadership of the Democratic Party upheld its progressive mandate, the credibility of the party remained high. Lyndon Johnson, once a segregationist himself, earned worldwide respect for the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, com-

Potential 1992 Candidates Average Progressive Ratings 1986-1990



Progressive Review Chart

mended the freedom fighters who marched in Selma and sang "We Shall Overcome." In January 1966 Johnson and Congress got unprecedented high ratings in the polls for liberal legislation. A Harris poll rated public approval of the Great Society legislation: medicare for the aged, 82 percent; federal aid to education, 90 percent; excise tax cuts, 92 percent; the voting rights act, 95 percent.

What went wrong? What brought about the most dramatic shift in public opinion since 1932?

The centrist Democrats have forgotten the somersault, the betrayal of Lyndon Johnson. It was not the liberal agenda that precipitated the long-term decline of the Democratic Party in the 1970s. It was only after Johnson's rightward shift, and the escalation of the illegal wars in Indochina, that mass defections from the party took place. In making fateful concessions to the generals, the Pentagon, the arms manufacturers--that "military industrial complex" of which Eisenhower warned--the Democrats "converted the greatest mandate, the greatest personal triumph of any election, that of 1964, to the greatest personal humiliation of any sitting president" [White]. The deployment of 500,000 troops to Vietnam, the carpet bombing of North Vietnam, the CIA atrocities (like Operation Phoenix that killed 20,000 South Vietnamese civilians), the growing contempt for world opinion and the rule of law, the drafting of black and brown high-school graduates whose new hopes for social progress were transformed into search and destroy operations abroad, the gutting of domestic programs (\$6 billion

As we went to press, members of Congress were congratulating themselves for their "agonizing" decision on Iraq. The media was congratulating Congress on the manner in which it reached its "agonizing" decision. And the President was "agonizing" as to whether to start World War III. This particular form of agony is most akin to that endured by a Mafia godfather wondering whether to order a hit on his former pal Lefty who has been skimming the family's profits. It points to the problem with attempting to inject morality into specific considerations without previously having had a moral premise. With such a premise, recognizing and avoiding sheer madness becomes a lot less agonizing. We will have more on this subject next month, if there is one. -- S.S.

cut in 1966), the war-induced inflation that stretched into the late 1970s--all caused a period of decline and disillusionment from which Americans and Democrats have yet to recover.

Theodore White writes that "The confidence of the American people in their government, their institutions, their leadership, was shaken as never before since 1960...The Vietnam decisions of 1965 were to initiate a sense of helplessness in American life which no candidate could cure." In its fatal right-wing shift, the party leadership turned its back "on all the great promises and domestic experiences of one of the most visionary administrations ever to hold helm in America."

In 1968 Hubert Humphrey, once proud of his liberal record, campaigned as Johnson's proxy. His centrist campaign, his broken spirit, his refusal to make a clean break from Johnson's war, his refusal to call for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, made Nixon's victory possible. The Republicans have a history of goading liberal Democrats into right-wing wars against Third World countries, then leaving Democrats with the results of their own folly. And once again the Republicans outsmarted the Democrats. Notwithstanding his record as a witch-hunter and war-hawk, Nixon became--by default of the Democrats--the "peace" candidate. He offered a secret plan for ending the war. The Democrats, so far gone in pro-interventionist policy, were outflanked again.

The Johnson betrayal made subsequent Democratic victory nearly impossible. Both Hubert Humphrey, who campaigned as Johnson's proxy, and McGovern, who was forced to campaign against his own party leadership in a time of disarray, were part of the aftermath of Johnson's folly.

In their right-wing shift in the mid-sixties, the Democrats turned from a party of peace to a party of

war, a party of hope to a party of despair, a party of civil rights to a party of vacillation and Bakke-backlash. Today's centrist Democrats have a lack of clear democratic principle, disregard for the opinions of mankind, contempt for constitutionalism and the international rule of law, immersion in the ideology of imperialism, dependency on corporate finance and the PAC system of electoral bribery, loss of faith in human progress and empowerment. All these centrist maladies go back to the period of self-destruction when the Democratic Party leadership betrayed its mandate for peace, equality and social reform.

The centrist strategy today is merely a continuation of what took place in the mid-sixties when the Democratic Party made its fateful right turn.

Carter Goes Down With The Shah

The Carter Administration was no exception to the right-wing follies of one-term Democratic presidents. Betrayal of his own human rights policy brought Carter's own downfall. The American people first liked Jimmy Carter. They respected his stand in support of human rights, and they viewed him as a genuine humanitarian. The historic Camp David accords generated world-wide respect and brought widespread approval at the polls.

Then Carter made one of those right-wing mistakes that prove to be the undoing of the Democratic Party. There is an old saying: "Lie down with dogs, get up with fleas." On New Years Eve in Teheran in 1978, at a private party in the sumptuous home of the Shah of Iran, whose SAVAK was notorious for terror and torture, Carter toasted the Shah and called Iran "an island of stability" in a troubled world. It was not long after that riots broke out, and the hated Shah

was deposed. While South Africa offered asylum to the Shah, most countries, including Britain and France, closed their doors. President Carter first resisted the Shah's requests for safe haven in the United States. After all, the U.S. Embassy in Iran had warned the president of potential repercussions if the U.S. aided the Shah, whose hopes for a counter-revolution were public knowledge. In one prophetic moment Carter asked: "What do we do if our embassy personnel are taken hostage?"

But right-wing pressures on Democratic presidents are unceasing. David Rockefeller, whose banks held \$8 billion in Iranian assets, a personal friend of the Shah; and Henry Kissinger, mastermind of the illegal secret bombing of Cambodia for the Nixon administration, urged Carter to bring the Shah to the U.S. American arms dealers, who concluded \$15 billion in arms sales to the Shah between 1974 and 1978, also put pressure on the White House.

When Jimmy Carter succumbed to the pressure, he not only reversed his own position on human rights, he touched off a crisis that ended any chance for winning the campaign of 1980. Having goaded Carter into an open alliance with the deposed Shah, Kissinger and Rockefeller never took responsibility for the subsequent disaster. They let the Democrats take the blame.

Just as Eisenhower became the "peace" candidate against Truman's Korean war, just as Nixon capitalized on Johnson's war and Humphrey's timidity, so Ronald Reagan got credit for bringing home the hostages.

Defeatism in the 1980s

Antipathy to progressive politics still dominated the conservative, PAC-financed leadership of the Democratic Party throughout the 1980s. In 1982 for example, the national party leaders, including Walter Mondale and Edward Kennedy, opposed the progressive campaign of Harold Washington for mayor of Chicago. They even endorsed and worked for Washington's right-wing opponents--Jane Byrne and Richard Daley - before Washington (who spent \$1 million compared to Byrne's \$10 million and Daley's \$4 million) achieved an historic victory. In the national campaign of 1984, before his rout by Reagan, Mondale rejected all of Jesse Jackson's convention platforms.

The Congressional Quarterly called Mondale's platform "economically the most conservative platform in the last fifty years." Mondale called for cuts in social spending, higher taxes (without specification of corporate and wealthy categories), and an increased military budget. In their 1980s campaigns both Mondale and Dukakis minimized the concerns of African-Americans and Hispanics, and both degraded the peace movement and women's movement to the level of "special interests." The Dukakis silence on the atrocities against Nicaragua, his insult to Jesse Jackson, his media tank-ride, (a pitiful attempt to out-macho Bush), all weakened the Democratic campaign for the presidency.

What will Democrats do in 1992? Will they nominate a candidate like Sam Nunn, the senator who campaigned for George Wallace? Will they move farther to the right? Will "moderate" Democrats, like a running back who feints to the left on a right-end sweep, put on a superficial liberal show for the sole purpose of stopping a genuine progressive.

Of course we cannot predict the future with certainty, and history is only a "lantern on the stern." But at least we can prepare for future elections by connecting history's dots; we can perceive the connection between the long, sorry record of Democratic right-wing follies and the recent decade of national defeats. There is still time--and plenty of support--for Democrats to recall their own history and to recover their lost progressive heritage.

It is true that some activists have already lost hope for progressive change with the Democratic Party. Yet we cannot forget how often the masses surprised themselves as well as their country's leaders. Vaclav Havel, Czechoslovakian playwright and revolutionary, commented in a recent interview: "Society is a mysterious animal with many faces and hidden potentialities, and it's extremely short-sighted to believe that the face society happens to be presenting to you at a given moment is its only true face...None of us know all the potentialities that slumber in the spirit of the population...or all the ways in which the population can surprise us when there is the right interplay of events, both visible and invisible."

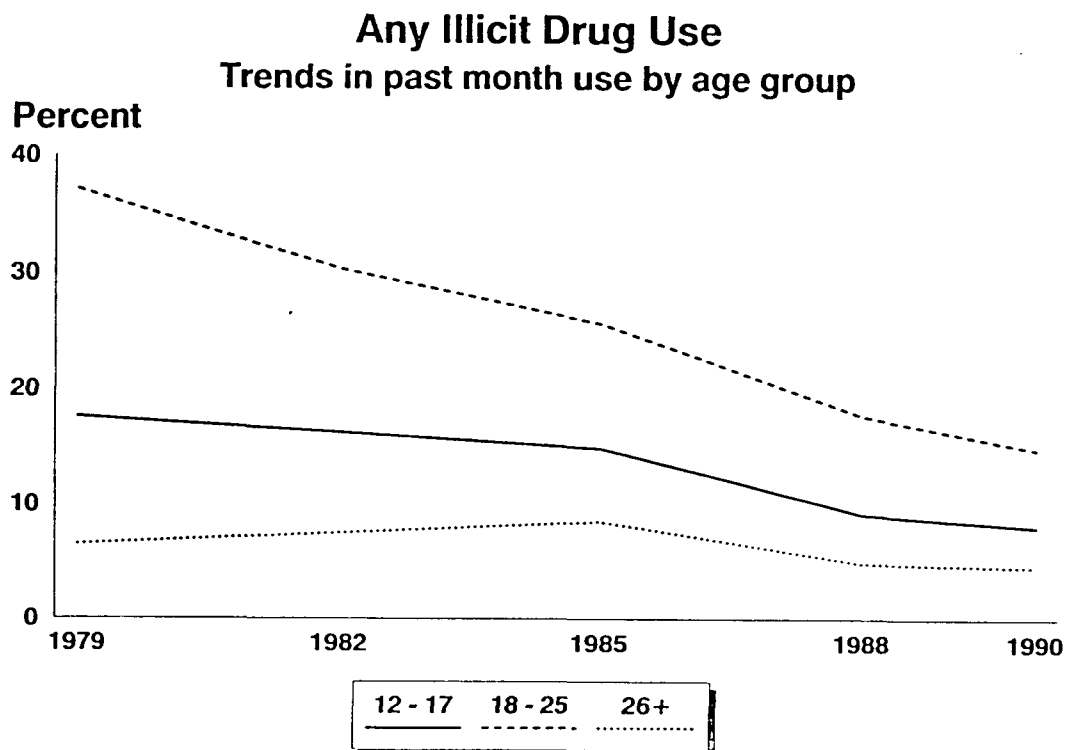
Or as Jesse Jackson put it: "The arc of the universe is long, but bends toward justice."

Easy to Please Department

"Washington is pleased with Panama's cooperation on drug interdiction, although the flow of cocaine from Colombia continues unabated. The Free Zone in Panama's Atlantic coastal city of Colon remains a transshipment point for perhaps a third of the cocaine-making chemicals bound for the Colombian drug cartels, US experts say." --*Washington Post*

The Weather Report

Can you find the War on Drugs in this picture?



Source: National Household Survey on Drug Abuse

If you look very carefully you'll find a little bump downwards in 1985 when Ronald Reagan first started yammering in earnest about drugs. But look what happened when the fierce new drug czar William Bennett took over a few years later. See how that little bump goes the other way? What do you think Bennett was doing with those billions? Look at the left half of the chart. See how drug use declined without any costly drug war at all? What do you think this means? Ask your congressman.

The Petro-Crusades

When Americans said they were willing to go to war over Kuwait what did they mean? A January 6 *Washington Post/ABC* poll suggests that a sizable number of them think it's possible to have a war in which our troops don't die. While 63% told the pollsters they were in favor of going to war to force Iraq out of Kuwait, when the question was changed to add the assumption that 1000 American troops died, support dropped to 44%. If it meant 10,000 troops died, only 35% would still hang in there. Some observers have suggested that the latter figure was a realistic minimum for a full-scale war.

As we have pointed out, the embargo of Iraq

involves a few violations of international law itself, particularly its inclusion of food and medical supplies. Now the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War reports that infant mortality in Iraq has doubled and that even Jordan, which took in over 700,000 Kuwaiti refugees, has had difficulty receiving medical aid. Technically medical supplies were supposed to be allowed, but the group says they were not in fact getting through because of the strict nature of the embargo. As of December, milk in Iraq was costing over ten dollars a quart.

You may have noticed those TV ads that featured a soldier writing, "All the people here are behind us, and I hope the folks back home are, because we sure need their support." Behind that ad was a group called the

Coalition for America at Risk, one of whose co-chairs, says the *New York Times*, is William R. Kennedy, registered with the Justice Department as an agent for the Kuwaiti Emergency Relief Fund, which manages the finances of Kuwaiti government and corporate officials. Meanwhile, an anti-war military family support group found television and radio stations refusing their ads because they were too "controversial."

Drug Busts

Add to the growing lists of those coming out for some form of drug legalization: Brian Kelly, former head of vice and narcotics for the Hartford Police Department; Connecticut state senator Bruce Morris; US District Court Judge Warren Eginton; and MIT economist Lester Thurow.

In a Nov. 19 page one story in the *Wall Street Journal*, Paul M. Barrett noted that the number of respondents listing drugs as one of the top two or three national problems had dropped to 25% from 70% a year earlier. Politicians from the president down aren't talking as much about drugs and neither are citizens. Several persons interviewed for the article expressed concern that the issue was being ghettoized, with the white establishment seeing it as a inner city problem, largely irrelevant to middle class or establishment concerns.

New Haven police chief Nicholas Pastore has also come out for drug decriminalization. He broke up a unit that focussed on mass arrests in high drug trafficking areas. The unit had generated thousands of arrests, but most of them had been thrown out of court. Pastore suggests that by decriminalizing drugs and focusing on drug abuse as a medical problem, society would free law enforcement to concentrate on public safety. Since Pastore initiated increased foot patrols and de-emphasized minor drug arrests, court-clogging arrests have dropped 26%, the murder rate has dropped slightly and the number of drive-by shootings has declined sharply.

One of the great uncovered stories has been the spate of draconian convictions handed down to minor drug offenders. Michael Isikoff and Tracy Thompson pointed out recently in the *Washington Post* that these penalties hurt small offenders more than large drug dealers.

Jim Michael, station manager of KBUT, a non-profit outlet in Crested Butte CO, says he won't take \$19,500 in federal money because it would mean the station would have to become a "drug-free workplace." Said Michael: "The bottom line here is a person who wants to smoke a little pot shouldn't be restricted from being involved in the community radio station... All of a sudden, a certain kind of people are being singled out as second class. Why don't they have a caffeine test? Or a sugar test? Or a bigotry test? I would be much more comfortable providing a bigotry-free workplace than a drug-free workplace."

Old News

Pursued by a Costa Rican extradition order, accused terrorist and drug trafficker John Hull has found a safe haven in the United States. Hull, a C.I.A.

Georgie in Nyah-Nyahland

The rhetoric and morality of the president over the past few months is of the same infantile belligerent genre that many parents spend years exorcising from their children. A few cases in point:

- Bush's boastful and threatening nyah-nyah speak is perhaps the most obvious sign of his arrested development. He chronically relies on tough-kid talk such as various references to what is going to happen to someone's ass or his description of a US Senator as a "chicken-shit." Given his record in this regard, one would not have been surprised to find that his rejected letter to Saddam Hussein closed with "And so's your mother."

- Bush, of course, lies but again like a child. He is incapable to seeing obvious internal contradictions in his own statements, such as that between claiming to go "the extra mile" while at the same time refusing to negotiate. Further, while sending Baker to deliver an ultimatum to the Iraqi foreign minister constitutes in his mind going that extra mile, a partial Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait is only a "ploy."

- Bush blithely, and without a hint of remorse, contradicts earlier statements on a regular basis. For example, he announced on August 15 that "sanctions are working." On December 4 he said, "I've not been one who has been convinced that sanctions alone will bring him to his senses." Which George Bush was lying to us?

- Bush creates an imaginary environment for his self-justification. For example, the *Washington Post* loyally reported on January 5 that "The president's hard-line approach yesterday underscores what policymakers describe as his growing impatience with Saddam and his determination not to be humiliated by endless talks with an adversary." Of all things that might have concerned Bush at that moment, the latter problem was the least of his worries, as he had not held *any* talks with his adversary.

- Bush seems incapable of seeing what is going on in other than the most personal terms. Much as he did with Noriega, he has compressed centuries of Middle East conflict into a grudge match between Hussein and himself. The fact that Bush regularly refers to Hussein by his first name illustrates his immature obsession with the personal aspects of the matter.

Early in the Bush administration, we pointed out that Bush was our first true preppie president. Other presidents went to prep school, but they grew up. The problem with George Bush is that he never did.

contract agent whose ranch in Costa Rica was a base for contras and drug traffickers, was discovered in Nicaragua last fall after disappearing from the United States.

Hull's stay in Nicaragua was cut short when the Nicaraguan Supreme Court ordered his arrest and extradition to Costa Rica. Hull apparently stayed briefly with his Tampa friend and business associate, Bruce Jones. Jones fled Costa Rican in 1984 after boasting to Life magazine that he was helping Nicaraguan contras on orders from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Hull is still a fugitive from Costa Rica where the government was preparing to request his extradition from the United States. Hull's name has been added to Interpol's most-wanted list. He is also a defendant in a federal lawsuit filed by the Christic Institute.

The Mediocracy

The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* both came out on the same day recently with long pieces on the troubles of the newspaper industry that read like Soviet analyses of last year's agricultural shortfalls. The articles parodied the problem. Although the *Times* still publishes occasionally spritely writing, the *Post* has become consistently dull, priggishly conservative, badly edited and amazingly devoid of news, which has had to give way to endless (often trite as well as wrong) analysis of what it all means. Although conventional wisdom in the editorial suites is moving against story jumps, they remain virtually the last refuge of real facts in the *Post*, where they can occasionally hide in the closing paragraphs of a story.

Nowhere is the *Post's* editorial malaise more apparent than in the Style section, originally designed to liven up the place but now having all the excitement of the Cosmos Club dining room, for whose patrons it is apparently written. Although the banal fitness cheerleading of Remar Sutton has been mercifully retired, it has been replaced by a turgid, meandering rip-off of Cecil Adams, the truly funny and informative answer man of alternative weeklies. Chuck Conconi's "gossip" column items seem edited by consortium of Indiana high school principals and the personality features are typified by a recent paean to the *Post's* own Carl Rowan that rambled on for three pages on the same day that the downsized *Post* couldn't find room to announce a major increase in local taxicab fares.

All this, of course, is merely annoying. Far more troublesome, however, is the escalation of the *Post's* rightward tilt and its beating of the drums of war. It appears that the shift is at least partially due to the increasing de facto power of managing editor Leonard Downie and publisher Donald Graham as they move out from the shadow of Ben Bradlee and Katherine Graham respectively. *Time* has suggested that Downie is "less willing to take on the powerful" than even the power-hugging Bradlee. *Spy* reports that Donald Graham has promised his sister, Lally Weymouth, that when Bradlee officially retires, "the *Post* will become much more conservative." There's not much further it can go.

If the *Post* wants to find out how to make itself more readable, it need look no further than the nearest newsrack. The *New York Times* we read for information, the *Post* we read to track the mindset of the Washington establishment, but the *Washington Times* we read for sheer enjoyment.

Once you learn to skip the right-wing proselytizing and any story that mentions Korea (it being, after all, the favorite charity of the Rev. Moon), you discover that the *Washington Times* is much more readable, better laid out and edited, than this city's standard daily fare. Further, the *Washington Times* -- unlike the other two -- feels to compelled to let its readers know what the American left is up to and often does so in a surprisingly even handed manner. Thus, it was in the *WT* that we first read a long description of the novel peace camp being established in the desert between American and Iraqi forces to provide a human shield for non-violence.

Besides, Mike Davis, a former *Washington Star* reporter who went to work for the *WT*, used to respond to criticism of his new employer by saying, "Look, I've worked for lots of publishers who thought they were God."

There are, of course, a few journalists who have not succumbed to the general torpor of the *NYT* and *WP* and who still see writing as part of their job. The *NYT*, in fact, seems to have a fledgling affirmative action program for good writers, albeit assigning them to a few carefully circumscribed ghettos such as column one of the second section or under headlines that suggest This Isn't Serious Journalism. Thus we found last month under the head "Rome Journal" a fine piece by Clyde Haberman in which he described Italy as having "the world's sixth largest economy west of Minsk or east of Vladivostok." He also slipped in a reference to the new year as the "palindromic 1991" and offered this description of the Italian post office:

"Two years ago, it took the average letter 8.5 days to go from one point to another in Italy. Now, the post office says, the delivery time has been trimmed, on average to four days and 15 hours. One could also note, however, that a person with one foot in a bucket of scalding water and the other in a pail of ice water is, on average, comfortable."

The *Realist* reports this correction from the *Fresno Bee*: "An item in Thursday's Nation Digest about the Massachusetts budget crisis made reference to new taxes that will help put Massachusetts 'back in the African-American.' It should have said 'back in the black.'"

Of the 25 major largest US newspapers, only one -- *The Rocky Mountain News* -- argued editorially during the first three and half months of the Gulf fiasco in favor of a negotiated settlement rather than the use of force.

Just Politics

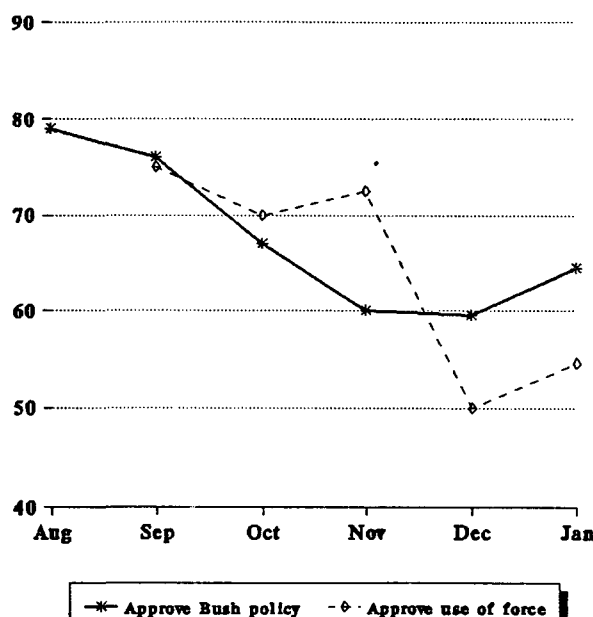
Between the League of Women Voters, camera-hogging journalists and cautious politicians, political debates in this country have been pretty well

emasculated for the past thirty years. One exception, reports Mary McGrory, was the John Silber-William Weld debate modelled on a modification of the Lincoln-Douglas match. The rules included no reporters, just the two candidates asking each other questions (45 seconds max) with 2-minutes for reply and 90 seconds for rebuttal. McGrory noted, "When it was over, the voters knew more about Silber and Weld, and the contestants had nobody to blame for points not raised or made... It's time to get the show biz out of debates, to remove the cushion of posturing analysts who protect the candidates and eat up time with interminable questions that deserve no answers."

Notes from the Real World

The Office of Management and Budget is pressing for elimination of the non-profit postal status of educational organizations unless their primary purpose is to administer a course of instruction through a teacher-student relationship in school. Says the

Approval of Gulf Policy Mean of Various National Polls



Progressive Review

Asked in 1930 how he could justify being paid more than the president of the United States, Babe Ruth responded, "I had a better year."

Washington Council of Agencies newsletter: OMB "would like to narrow the definition of 'educational' groups so that fewer organizations would be eligible for the non-profit mailing rates... Where does that leave those teaching runaways to cope? Where does that leave those teaching survival skills to the homeless? Where does that leave those teaching kids how to stay off

FIELD NOTES

Paving Moratorium: The Fossil Fuels Policy Action Institute is calling for a national moratorium on paving new roads and parking lots. [PO Box 8558, Fredericksburg VA 22404]

Defense Power Games: a pamphlet by Pentagon analyst Franklin C. Spinney, explains how front-loading of defense spending and political engineering will "continue to drive our nation deeper into a quagmire of spiraling weapon's costs, shrinking forces, and high defense budgets." A sharp look at the games the Pentagon plays by a real expert. [Copies from Fund for Constitutional Government, 121 Constitution Ave NE, DC 20002]

Brautigan Library: A unique public library specializing in unpublished literature is operating in Burlington, Vermont. The Brautigan Library is modeled after a fictional library described by the late Richard Brautigan in his 1970 novel, "The Abortion: An Historical Romance 1966." It is a library for writing outside the mainstream of commercial publishing, a library for works written by serious writers, as well as not-so-serious writers.

Writing of all sorts is accepted by the Brautigan Library: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, technical or literary works. The only restriction is that a piece of work may not have been previously published before being sent to the library.

The Brautigan Library is a nonprofit organization, funding itself with charitable contributions and with fees paid by writers to register their works. The library does not judge works it receives; all works are given an equal opportunity.

Unlike most libraries, which use the Dewey Decimal System, the Brautigan Library organizes its collection according to the "Mayonnaise System." The Mayonnaise System uses such categories as "Family," "Love," and "Street Life." Due to the rare nature of its books the Brautigan Library is not a lending library, so books must be read on the premises. [The Brautigan Library, P.O. Box 521, Burlington, Vermont 05402 (802) 658-4775]

Shopping for a Better World: A useful guide to the corporate world's social responsibility organized by product. Small enough to take shopping. The 1991 edition is described in our Getting Along section this month. \$6.45 [Council on Economic Priorities, 30 Irving Place NYC NY 10003-9990]

drugs? Where does that proposal leave the non-profit community?"

A 1940 survey of Princeton freshman found that they considered Adolf Hitler "the greatest living person."

Getting Along

Santa Clara County CA is now permitting bikes on all buses when passenger loads permit. Limited bike loading is also permitted on light rail.

The Council on Economic Priorities has given its annual top marks for corporate social responsibility to Colgate-Palmolive Co., maker of Colgate toothpaste; General Mills (Wheaties and Yoplait yogurt); Kellogg Co. (Corn Flakes and All Bran cereal) and S.C. Johnson (Johnson's Wax polish). In its annual ratings these firms were credited for such contributions as charitable giving, good working conditions for their employees and environmentally safe products.

At the bottom of CEP's list -- its "X-Rated Club," -- were American Cyanamid (Fiber Corn and Centrum vitamins); USX Corp. (Marathon Oil); Nestle S. A. (Baby Ruth candy, Fancy Feast cat food, Mighty Dog dog food); Abbott Laboratories (Murine eye solution and Selsun Blue shampoo); Castle & Cooke Inc. (Dole fruits and Sun Giant Raisins), Fantastic Foods and Tillamook Cheese. Among the failings of the bottom-ranked companies were environmental violations, civil rights policies, animal testing, investment in South Africa and poor family benefits.

The council's rankings are in its annual "Shopping for a Better World" guide, a publication that advises consumers on the social responsibility records of corporate America.

The guide rated 180 manufacturers of household products as well as health food companies, supermarket chains and oil companies. The 1991 edition rated more than 2,000 products and records 6,116 changed ratings from last year.

Companies just below the top rank included Celestial Seasonings, (herbal teas) Hershey Foods Corp., (chocolate) Procter & Gamble Co. (Cheer and Ivory detergents) and Polaroid Corp. (photographic film).

Role Models

Dean Rusk, quoted in the *Washington Journalism Review*: "I've experienced a lot of investigative journalism in my life, and I've never run across any that had a positive outcome." Rusk is the former Secretary of State who once, in reaction to a straightforward question about the Tet offensive by ABC's John Scali, asked "Whose side are you on, anyway?"

EPA head William Reilly who axed an ambitious recycling program the administration had been touting after the Presidential Council on Competitiveness, a sort of internal administration lobby for big business, urged him to drop it.

Colgate-Palmolive got credit for increasing its percentage of top minority officers to more than 10 percent from less than 5 percent and changing its plastic packaging to recycled materials.

The National Association of Social Workers has proposed a system of national health care that would be financed through a new personal income tax and employer payroll tax, replacing Medicare, Medicaid and most other federal health insurance programs. The federal government would have administrative control and states would deliver health services and pay costs.

The social workers offered two plans:

- "Option One" would offer a full range of services to everyone with no consumer deductible, out-of-pocket expense or co-insurance payment. Cost: \$720.6 billion in the first year, an initial increase of 10.3 percent over current health care expenditures but with future savings.

- "Option Two" would offer a full range of services to everyone with a "minimal" co-payment, based on income, for outpatient care. Individuals would pay up to \$15 for an outpatient visit and up to \$5 for prescription drugs. Cost: \$693.7 billion in the first year, a 6.2 percent increase over current costs.

The long-term savings would come from a 30 percent reduction, or \$9.6 billion annually, in administrative costs and lower payment rates to health care providers.

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